

REMARKS

Initially, it is noted that this Preliminary Amendment is in the newly approved revised format of amendments, such that a complete listing of claims is included and each section begins on a separate page of this paper.

Claims 2-12 have been cancelled and, therefore, Claim 1 remains pending in the present continuation patent application.

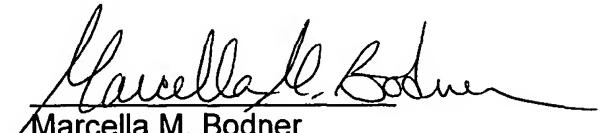
It is noted that the parent application (i.e., U.S. Application No. 09/708,138, filed November 8, 2000) was recently allowed and the issue fee was timely paid July 8, 2003, but it has not yet issued.

In addition, by the foregoing amendments, the specification of the present continuation application has been amended to include the required cross-reference to related applications, whereby the present continuation application claims priority benefit from the non-provisional parent application under 35 U.S.C. § 120, as well as from the provisional application relied upon by the parent application under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

In view of the foregoing remarks and explanation, it is believed that no new matter has been introduced into the present application by the foregoing amendments.

Please associate the present continuation application with **Customer Number 21898.**

Respectfully submitted,



Marcella M. Bodner
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 46,561
Telephone: (215) 592-3025

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ROHM AND HAAS COMPANY
100 Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2399